

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 01358 271250Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /069 W
-----004042 271426Z /45

R 271153Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6919
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1358

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SU
SUBJ: NIMEIRI TALKS WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI

REF: KHARTOUM 1230

1. NIMEIRI MET PRIVATELY WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI ON EVENING OF MARCH 25 AT HOME OF FATH AL-RAHMAN BASHIR, BUSINESSMAN GO-BETWEEN WHO HAD SPENT FOUR HOURS WITH SADIQ EARLIER THAT DAY. NIMEIRI DROVE HIMSELF AND CAME ALONE. APPARENTLY GENERAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED BUT NOT ALL DETAILS OF CONVERSATION ARE KNOWN.
 2. SADIQ TOLD NIMEIRI THAT HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM ANSAR, PARA-MILITARY ADHERENTS OF MAHDIST SECT, TO GIVE PROPER BURIAL TO HIS UNCLE, IMAM AL-HADI AL-MAHDI, WHO WAS KILLED IN MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES IN 1969 AFTER BLOODY ASSAULT OF ABA ISLAND BY NIMEIRI'S MILITARY FORCES, IMAM AL-HADI AL-MAHDI, SPIRITUAL LEADER OF MAHDISTS, WAS PROBABLY KILLED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO FLEE TO ETHIOPIA. HIS SECRET BURIAL IS SCANDAL TO ANSARS. SADIQ WANTS NIMEIRI TO MEET WITH SONS OF DECEASED IMAM AND DISCUSS THEIR WISHES
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PAGE 02 KHARTO 01358 271250Z

- FOR PROPER BURIAL.
3. SADIQ ALSO ASKED NIMEIRI TO ARRANGE THAT ANSAR BE ABSORBED INTO ECONOMY. HE SUGGESTED THAT ANSAR BE GIVEN PRIORITY WHEN APPLICATIONS FOR TENANCY ARE ACCEPTED FOR LARGE IRRIGATED FARM PROJECTS IN ORDER THAT ANSAR BE GIVEN MAJORITY OF PLOTS. NIMEIRI WAS ALSO ASKED TO MEET WITH ANSAR LEADERS INCLUDING SONS OF IMAM TO

EXPLAIN OR APOLOGIZE FOR ABA ISLAND ASSAULT AND OTHER SCANDALOUS INCIDENTS.

4. COMMENT: IN SUM, SADIQ WANTS NIMEIRI TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SADIQ HAS GAINED SOMETHING BY ACCEPTING RECONCILIATION AND COOPERATING WITH NIMEIRI SINCE HIS RETURN TO SUDAN LAST OCTOBER. NIMEIRI IS EXPECTED TO COMPLY WITH SADIQ'S REQUESTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH ARE RELATIVELY COSTLESS, E.G., MEETING WITH DISGRUNTLED ANSAR LEADERS AND PRAISING SADIQ. SADIQ HAS BEEN UNDER PRESSURE FROM ANSAR FOLLOWING HIS ACCEPTANCE OF AMNESTY. IN COMPLEX AND PRIDEFUL UNIVERSE OF ISLAMIC SECTARIANISM HERE, DADIQ NEEDS PERSONAL PRESTIGE AND NIMEIRI CAN HELP HIM OUT.
BERGUS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KHARTO01358
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780132-1058
Format: TEL
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780323/aaaaaswc.tel
Line Count: 75
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5abf12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 KHARTOUM 1230
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3197078
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIMEIRI TALKS WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SU, (SADIQ AL-MAHDI), (NIMEIRI, JAFAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5abf12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014